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ABSTRACT

A questionnaire was distributed to bookstore employees to determine their awareness and correct use of reference tools and skills with customers. Fifty employees returned the survey for a 42% response rate. The questionnaire collected demographic data on the education, work background, and on-the-job training of typical clerks at three Cleveland (Ohio) "upscale" bookstores. Only those staff members who have regular customer contact as part of their assigned duties participated; full-time buyers, administrators, and office staff were eliminated from the sample. It was found that most individuals in the group had a college education and some library experience, but very little reference training in their current positions. Seventy-six percent of the sample had an undergraduate degree and 26 percent had graduate degrees. Subjective questions found that the subjects were divided on their knowledge of computers, their use of reference books, and their willingness to call a library for assistance. This preliminary research points the way to the development of more effective training for bookstore clerks. Five tables present study findings; and three appendixes contain the 12-item questionnaire, its cover letter, and the field names and coding descriptions used. (Contains 21 references.) (SLD)

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THE USE OF REFERENCE TOOLS AND SKILLS BY BOOKSTORE EMPLOYEES

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the Kent State University School of Library and Information Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Library and Information Science

by

Eileen Coan

January, 1993

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ABSTRACT

A questionnaire was distributed to fifty bookstore employees to determine their awareness and correct use of reference tools and skills with customers. The questionnaire collected demographic data on the education, work background and on-the-job training of typical clerks at three Cleveland area 'upscale' bookstores. It was found that most of the group had college educations and some library experience but very little reference training in their curent position. Subjective questions found that the subjects were divided on their knowledge of computers, their use of reference books and their willingness to call a library for assistance. This preliminary research points the way to the development of more effective training for bookstore clerks.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL.....ii

LIST OF FIGURES.....iv

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION.....1

Purpose of the Study.....1

Definitions of Terms.....2

Limitations of the Study.....2

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....4

3. METHODOLOGY.....14

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....16

5. CONCLUSION.....30

Appendixes

A. QUESTIONNAIRE.....31

B. COVER LETTER.....33

C. FIELD NAMES AND CODING DESCRIPTIONS.....34

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....36

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE PAGE

1. Job-related Conferences or Workshops Attended.....18

2. Job-related Self-Study Pursued by Participants.....19

3. Reference Tools for Sale in the Sample Bookstores That have Been Used by Participants to Make a Sale.....20

4. Reasons Given by Survey Participants For and Against CAlling a Library for Customer Assistance.....21

5. Ideas for a Fantasy Information/Reference Desk in a Bookstore, Listed by Type and Frequency When More than One.....23

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Working in a bookstore while going to graduate school in library science can offer a unique perspective on two fields that are very similar in content but can be very different in approach. Both fields appeal to individuals who love books and want to match people with the right book for their needs, but one is based on sales and profit, and the other on pure information. With each library science class, the bookseller would be able to apply new skills on the job, using search and reference techniques with customers that go far beyond the usually informal and brief bookstore training.

This researcher is currently in this situation and experiences this phenomenon every day. But what of the bookstore clerk who is not able to take advantage of the skills taught in library science schools? What can be done to make bookstore managers aware of the benefits of library science knowledge to their store's productivity? Can these classes be modified and condensed and presented so that all bookstore employees can offer customers the best reference help they can based on the technology and resources available today?

In searching the literature, there are several historical references to the value of training booksellers in research methods, but the current literature had very few instances of truly thorough bookstore training. The literature shows that parallels exist between librarians and bookstore clerks, but no work has been done to look at what the key differences are. This research evolved out of a desire to take advantage of the similarities between the two professions, to provide the kind of training to bookstore clerks that could increase book sales.

Purpose of the Study

Ideally, a scientific study could be conducted offering in-depth training to a random sample of bookstore employees. Using a control group, an evaluation could be done

similar to library reference evaluations asking about reference completion rates, reference transactions per capita, patron satisfaction and sales figures. But, before such an intervention can happen, there is a need for some baseline information. To create an appropriate training for booksellers - one that will improve their performance - the first step is to survey their strengths and deficiencies, look at the factual information they already have, the techniques they are using and their success or fill rate. A hypothesis might be that there is a positive correlation between the amount of reference training a bookseller receives, the correct use of reference materials, and the success of customer transactions.

The main objective was to identify some of the factors that contribute to successful bookstore assistance. A lesser objective was to have participation in a survey result in the improvement or refinement of bookstore clerk's techniques and bookstore management's approach to training. The ultimate implication of such research might be that the opportunities for continuing education and professional development for all persons working with books would be supported, facilitated and even rewarded by those in charge of such decisions.

Definitions of Terms

When using the term 'reference' it will include any print or electronic tool that assists in finding or selecting a book, something that offers an abstract, summary, review or bibliographic information beyond the basic inventory record. When using the term 'bookstore' it will refer to a business where the main purpose is to sell books. This would not be a store that offers books as a sideline in an unstaffed area. A 'bookseller' is someone whose primary job duty is to assist customers on the sales floor.

Limitations of the Study

As reported in Hernon and McClure (1987), there are many psychological limitations to a study of this nature. Asking these types of questions is bound to arouse suspicions in a bookstore's staff and probably resistance. They will wonder if they are

being tested by their supervisors and they may alter their behavior just for the duration of the survey, figuring out the right answer instead of the answer that best matches their behavior. They may express appropriate defensiveness for the implied need to improve their reference skills, especially considering the time pressure they experience when helping several customers at the same time, in person and on the phone, unassisted.

Participants may question the value of such a study considering the limited budget of bookstores for purchasing reference tools and technology, the attitudes towards formal training they have observed in management and the lack of personal financial reward for assisting the researcher or for improving their skills.

There are also statistical limitations to this type of research. Without a pretest and posttest, there is no basis on which to compare the figures collected. Without a control group, the bias and sensitivity that is caused by participation alone cannot be rule out. Without a concurrent customer satisfaction survey or actual observation of customer inquiries, there is no way to gauge if reported skills are valid, or if present skill levels are adversely effecting sales. And of course, this is not a random sample. Bookstore staffs have many self-selected traits that separate them from the general public. Even the three stores chosen for this research do not represent comparable groups: one store has a national headquarters that employs full-time trainers; another is a privately owned chain that has a driver who deliver books between five stores, so when the store closest to a customer is out of a book, it can be brought that same day from another store.

Because the subjects of the study are all from bookstores in northeastern Ohio, findings are not necessarily generalizable to all bookstores. A final limitation is that one of the stores opened just two months before the survey was conducted. Ideally, this would enough time for staff to be thoroughly trained, but new clerks cannot be expected to have developed or absorbed the insights that can only come from experience.

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To look at the historical context of bookstore employee training, one could go back hundreds of years to the times of monks and scribes, or to more recent centuries when book collectors were only men of degrees. This review will start with the modern era to find discussion and examples of bookstores that catered to the literate public and, in time, were the ones that took advantage of the new technology. There are many instances of bookseller biographies that trace long and varied careers, only mentioning employees in personal anecdotes. This paper will start with three examples that offered a personal glimpse but were mainly put forth as texts, or books of practical bookselling technique. The following summaries represent Britain at a time when book clerks were expected to pass technical courses for a bookselling diploma, and America when continuing education for bookstore staffs was highly recomended.

The material in Smith (1964) is based on the syllabus of the British Booksellers Association diploma exam. Each chapter is a theme, with pointers and exercises included. Writing in 1964, he states that the book trade has not had a book of this practical nature until now. The topics include: use of publisher catalogs, how to classify, basic stock, and subject knowledge. He begins by describing the principal business of a bookseller which includes employing a staff skilled in "bibliography." He is uncanny in his prediction of what special skills and knowledge would be required in the future. He said with the then current trend toward "supermarket retailing," booksellers must have the trained and educated staff to deal with the more "discriminating" shopper. One example of the great need he places on quality customer service can be seen in the statement "It is more important to know something about the books you do not stock than about those you do stock" (p18). What he meant is that it is not acceptable to turn away a customer because the book they need isn't on the shelf, you must know how to order it for them. In regard to specific reference skills, Smith strongly advises all bookstore staff to have a thorough knowledge of sources of

information, and a nonjudgmental approach to the reference interview. Further chapters go into searching and ordering techniques that no longer apply in the age of computers and CD-ROMs.

Joy's work (1964) is another British text offering pointers to booksellers, covering the range of economical concerns, promotions, record-keeping and censorship. An older text, like Smith's, some of what he describes is irrelevant today, but he has helpful things to say about staff training. He believes that one of the most useful ways for new bookshop assistants to gain experience is by attending Bookseller Association meetings and practical training courses where they will meet and talk to poeple with years of experience. He says a bookseller's knowledge should not just include the literature, but the contents and uses of reference books. He devotes a section to 'dos' and 'donts' of customer service; some 'dos' include walking customers to the section they need, not just pointing, using reference tools in front of customers so they can see you are busy trying to help them, and letting them talk because they are often wanting to air their knowledge and opinions. A few 'donts' to avoid are using insider terminology, ignoring the next customer while you finish with the current one, and answering a question with "we never stock that."

When Joy talks specifically about the selection and training of bookshop assistants, he believes that the importance of a university degree can be over valued; customer complaints more often result from discourteous service than uninformed service. While he agrees with Smith that the courses offered by Booksellers Association are invaluable, he sees the manager as having the most important role in staff training. He encourages managers to leave the trade papers around for the staff to read, to teach new workers every task there is in the store, and to become familiar with the stock and the way things work.

At that time in England, it was expected that the better bookstores would only employ assistants with a Bookselling diploma. The seven required courses were:

history and development of English and twentieth century literature, bookshop practice and management, bibliography and applied bibliography. The regulations were strict, requiring experience and letters of reference before sitting for the exam. While somewhat comparable to an undergraduate degree in literature here in America, it is unheard of for bookstores here today to require such an intensive commitment of store clerks for such low wages.

Moving on to the American historical perspective of bookseller training, Duffy's manual from 1969 is actually the American Booksellers Association's (ABA) collection of essays by various experts in the field. Choosing a store location and architect, accounting methods, sidelines, autograph parties and surviving Christmas are just some of the thirty-five chapters included. For the purposes of this paper, the focus will be on the sections that discuss the hiring and training of personnel. A trend toward self service was already being noticed in the 1960s, but the ABA is devoted to the stores where customer service is highly valued.

The authors reiterate a point made earlier that a knowledgeable staff can only help so much, but a courteous staff can make the difference. Because of its year of publication, the manual makes many "politically incorrect" comments about hiring housewives and people over the age of forty-five who have been turned away elsewhere, but most of the advice is still timely. In regard to training, a step by step agenda is offered, from introducing new staff members and explaining the classification of books, to the mechanics of the sale. Here, as in the previous two texts, there is an emphasis on training the bookseller in the use of reference materials. Another interesting prediction is made regarding the bookseller's need to compete with television and movies, but the authors assure the reader there is no danger in bookstore clerks being replaced by machines. The idea is put forward that even though bookselling is hard work for very little pay, it will always attract a special kind of jobseeker, one that looks for intrinsic rewards.

Jumping ahead twenty years, Muller (1988) describes attending one of the Booksellers Schools conducted by the ABA for prosepective and current bookstore owners and managers. Over 10,000 people have participated over the years in these intensive sesions led by and for professionals. Topics covered are similar to those in the textbook described earlier, focusing here on the content of the customer service and personnel management workshops.

Instructors emphasized that personnel must be "reliable" and "credible, " traits that cannot be bluffed; staff must know precisely how to handle a wide variety of requests for titles or assistance. True knowledge was shown here to include the ability to offer **alternatives**, even if it meant calling another store. Another leader stressed that proper use of the phone is like a "second front door" for prosepective customers. Advanced training of clerks would also be necessary for bookstores to become what one leaser called "resource centers," where teachers and librarians know they could turn to the staff in their selection process.

A sample of the current literature describing the desired traits and training of bookselling staff will be presented now. A change can be seen in the attitudes of bookstore owners whose ideas have been published compared to what was being said in the 1960s . While education is still valued, it is not required, nor is additional formal training offered by most businesses. Here is a job with low wages and few benefits, and the result in today's slow economy is bookstores filled with part-time, transient, inexperienced workers who are quickly taught the mechanics of ringing up a sale but rarely taught the subtleties of bibliographic searching.

Stricker (1992), an MLS professional, described this dilemma best when he wrote of his brief sojourn in a bookstore during a holiday season. His training consisted of handling as much of the stock as possible by shelving and restocking the books, with the goal of recognizing by memory as many of the titles as possible. Although human memory can store a lot of information, Stricker's main source of frustration was that

when memory failed, the bookstore had no subject guides or indexes of its stock to assist in a search. He believes booksellers need to learn from the advanced technical methods available for organizing collections. Too often he and his co-workers would end up recommending that a customer visit their local library and come back with a list of titles that fit their need. There are several problems with this method; it means two extra errands for busy shoppers who are ready to spend money right now, and the library is not likely to have the most recent titles that a bookstore has access to. On the positive side, Stricker does point out that libraries can learn a lot from bookstore merchandizing methods of facing books out, their convenient hours and friendlier service.

Another perspective from an 'insider' is offered by Florey (1984), a published author who works one day a week in a bookstore. She draws the same distinction that most of the sources do between a "good" bookstore and the ones that are more like supermarkets or discount stores. She sees that what she does there is hard work, something that doesn't fit most people's fantasy of a bookstore job where one can spend time reading and discussing the books. Florey notes that it is this fantasy which keeps most bookstore's files filled with willing job applicants. This self-selected pool of serious readers may explain why training is quick and mainly mechanical; managers count on their staff to already be well versed in at least a few subject areas. She says this is good when a worker instills excitement in a customer about a favorite obscure author or title, but it doesn't help the customer who has a specific need that won't be solved by browsing or a sociable chat with a clerk.

Following up on this idea of what kind of bookstore or bookstore staff people like better, there are four articles that look at both the statistics and the observable evidence of what works. A New York magazine survey (1992) of the best specialty bookshops in New York City gives points for atmosphere, which can include pleasing odors (old books or incense), type of shelving (wood is better than metal), and the chances of spotting a "rare find." But, as expected, they offer the most praise to well trained staff,

especially favoring the oddly dressed quirky clerks who, when questioned, are clearly experts in their field.

Newsweek did a similar story in 1990, looking at what small book businesses were flourishing and why, even in the presence of large chain operations. Here too are the romantic descriptions of aroma, woodgrain, armchairs and cafes, but the success is more directly linked to the service they offer, perhaps **because** they are smaller. They have developed literature tests for job applicants, and they place orders based on what their customers (who they often know by name) are asking for, not just what is selling at the airport or what the sales reps say is hot. One store owner aptly summarizes the customer-driven approach to service by saying "if we do our job, we're closer to pastors or psychologists than salesmen" (Jones 1990, 57).

The surveys done by Wood (1984) and Fields (1984), although not as recent, back up this idea of cultivating the regular customer. They found it is heavy readers that buy their own books; lighter readers are more often given books as gifts. It can be inferred that heavy readers probably are the ones buying the gift books for the light readers, since heavy readers find themselves in bookstores more often. These surveys also report that a book is most often bought based on its subject matter or a recommendation, rather than its bestselling status, the book jacket or the reputation of the author. Here one could infer that a trained staffs knowledge of subject areas and the contents of books is more important than how the staff has arranged the books or trying to rely on an author's past performance as a selling point.

Moving away from the traits and skills customers say they like in a bookstore employee to the real focus of this research, this section will examine the only articles found on how bookstore managers are actually training their staff today and two articles that explore why it is so hard to find and keep good bookstore staff.

Roback (1991) asked children's booksellers around the country how they train staff to be knowledgeable about children's titles. The two criteria repeated over and over are:

one, only hire people who have taken a course in children's literature (teachers, librarians, day care staff), and two, expect them to read every new picture book that comes in (and at least the dust jacket of every novel). Some stores report having their staff fill out a card summarizing a book for their reference file. Some have monthly staff book discussions, allow staff to sit in on buyer's meetings with sales reps, or send their staff to hear authors when they speak locally. Others practice customer service doing role plays around difficult questions. Each respondent mentioned that loving the books isn't enough: they keep staff who have polished interpersonal skills. These results do not mention reference tools or the use of online searching.

Myers (1991), Bolles (1987) and Foussianes (1989) all report on a particular case example of staff training methods used by Books & Co, Borders, and the Bryn Mawr Bookshops, respectively. While Myers' article is a fascinating look at training people in the specialized field of antiquarian book pricing, it is not helpful for this paper's purpose because the stores are run completely by alumni volunteers. At Books & Co. in Dayton, Ohio, employees are given a manual that spells out the specific wording, including enunciation, to be used when answering customer questions. The owner, Annye Camara, was greatly influenced by a management text that stressed the importance of people knowing exactly what they are supposed to be doing. Her manual covers every aspect of running the store, from booting the computer to changing a fuse, from the history of the store to how to gift wrap a book. It is kept on the word processor because it is a constantly evolving reference tool. This thoroughness begins in the hiring process when applicants are asked essay-style questions. She doesn't want to waste time training someone hired from a "flimsy first impression."

What really stands out in Camara's method is the use of cassette taped tours of the store. New workers must listen to four hours of descriptions that include the layout of each section, its strong backlist titles and tips on new titles. Workers also sign a ten-page contract that clearly outlines the accountability of the staff and the management.

Workers learn to ring up sales by practicing after hours. The three month review is a formal extension of how this store finetunes its operations to create a higher quality staff.

Borders is a growing chain based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Foussianes reports that they interview applicants only after they pass a literature test; they only hire people in as full-time workers, and then they train them to be electronically literate using the Books In Print available on CD-ROM. Managers there want staff to be able to use the computer for "sophisticated searches," which has greatly improved their ability to help customers. They hope they have "married the literary bent of its employees with the latest in retail technology" (Foussianes 1989, 55). They achieve consistency by having staff members whose only job is to train people. The result is less turnover than expected in retail, with one store not losing anyone in a year. The traveling trainers add a third mid-level management opportunity in a business that usually only has floor workers and a few top managers.

Why do Books & Co. and Borders seem to be alone in their dedication to staff training? Pederson (1991) and Mutter and O'Brien (1988) both use store surveys to discuss how the low salary offered in most bookstores results in high turnover and thus shortens the chances to provide in-depth training. Pederson says that, in retail, an employee who is still there after a year can be considered a "veteran." In a slow economy, like it is now, booksellers can choose from a much more educated and willing group even when offering minimum wages, but owners report that a larger pool is not providing the antidote to turnover. These people are from a transient population, perhaps recent grads or midlife changers who will move on as soon as a better opportunity arrives.

When a store has succeeded in stopping the "revolving door" of employment, it can be attributed to two causes: offering full-time wages well above the minimum or at least a decent benefit package; and offering the chance to be involved in the whole bookselling process, from selection and ordering to merchandising. Another factor that contributes

to longevity is whether or not the bookstore is actively involved in the cultural community, serving as a magnet for like-minded staff. When bright educated people can earn more working in fast food restaurants, bookstores must offer non-monetary incentives and rewards. Staff will stay around if they love bookselling and are treated with respect. A passion for reading isn't enough if workers don't feel valued for the expertise they bring.

How successful managers talk about their staff can be indicative of why workers choose to stay. One owner said that their staff was "irreplaceable" and called them the "key to our success." In striking contrast, other survey respondents in Mutter and O'Brien's paper said prospective workers only need to be able to "breathe," "tie shoes," or have legible handwriting (1988, 36). Having a boss who says its not necessary to have well-read cashiers would certainly be disheartening to an enthusiastic applicant. Please note here that, relevant to this paper's hypothesis, Mutter and O'Brien's article included the only current mention found of one store's intentionally seeking out applicants who have experience doing "research work" because of the ackowledged need for staff to get involved in tracking down titles and subjects.

Considering what has been presented here about the great need for quality training programs and the rare instances of bookstores that employ them, Graham offers a positive note for the future. He says "for an industry in which any reasonably educated person can carve a career without a single qualification, publishing hasn't done so badly" (Graham 1991, 54). He is heartened by the signs of American publishers moving toward the diploma or prescribed entry qualifications of the European countries discussed in the beginning of this chapter. He sees that by the twenty-first century this field may no longer be the "accidental profession." There is a growing internationalism that has exposed this country's booksellers to what they are missing. A good example to end this section with is described by Fakih (1989). She wonders why book enthusiasts are often the most anxious when it comes to computerizing their inventory. It is usually

competition and financial pressures that make electronic control inevitable, even when booksellers are assured that computerizing should never change the way they do business. "A computer is a tool, that's all...it shows you are a resourceful person, but it doesn't replace you" (Fakih 1989, 16).

That quote is a useful transition to the discussion of methodology because it includes the key elements of the proposed survey. The researcher wanted to find what reference tools, including computers, are being used by booksellers, how resourceful they are with these tools, and what is still missing in their arsenal that has them sending customers away to check a library. It was hoped that this survey would go beyond the anecdotal reports described in this chapter, to begin to provide a statistically relevant basis for bookseller training in reference tool selection and use.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Survey Instrument

To assess reference skills and knowledge and their use among bookstore staff, a written questionnaire was developed (see Appendix A). The demographic variables to be measured include: age, sex, education, years of bookselling experience, and amount of formal bookselling training, either on the job or from outside coursework. The variables of reference skills and knowledge are measured by answers to open-ended questions about specific reference tools, both online and print, adult and juvenile. An attempt was made to get at more subjective measures such as searching style, perseverance, specificity and efficiency. Katz and Fraley (1984) found that among library reference staffs, education correlated with efficiency and searching style, experience correlated with accuracy, and certain personality traits correlated with customer satisfaction. They then were able to assign their subjects to one of three performance levels based on their use of reference materials, their willingness to seek more reference knowledge and their ability to pass that new information on to co-workers. Suggestions in developing this tool were also taken from Oak Lawn Library (1988) which published sample questions and data collecting tools.

Subjects

The subjects are 50 workers from three bookstores in the Cleveland area. Over 100 questionnaires were distributed originally, but the return rate by the designated time of completion was neglible. The researcher made an appeal for greater participation on three seperate occasions, both over the phone and in personal visits to each of the stores. With this added encouragement, 50 returned questinnaires represent a 42% return rate.

Of the three, one business is family owned and operated with five stores around the area; the other two are part of national chains of "good" bookstores. These stores were chosen for their availability to the researcher and because they all pride themselves on their customer service, as opposed to other national chains that usually operate out of

malls, don't do special orders, and don't generally hire staff that are already knowledgeable about literature. Only those staff members who have regular customer contact as part of their assigned duties were asked to participate. This eliminated full-time buyers, administrators and office staff. With each store manager's permission, subjects found the questionnaire displayed in the employee lunch room bulletin board. Participants were instructed by a cover letter (see Appendix B) that asked them to complete the survey on their own time, without discussing their answers with other workers. Participation was voluntary and anonymity was preserved. Completed surveys were returned in collection envelopes left on-site and picked up by the researcher.

Data Analysis

Using the EDD computer program for data analysis, the survey questions were divided into 23 fields. The only variable measured that was not listed on the actual survey was 'store'; the researcher coded the surveys for this as they were returned. (See Appendix C for the list of fields and their coded categories.) The open-ended quesions regarding search style were assigned a yes or no for general correctness to be calculated by the computer and examined again for key words and phrases for the purpose of discussion. The data was manipulated to determine descriptive statistics, percentages, cross-tabulations, and some correlations when appropriate.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results for each question are described individually before looking at the relationships between variables. A demographic outline of the response population is drawn first and then sample answers to the subjective questions are charted.

The potential existed for equal distribution among the three stores but the actual returns are heavily weighted toward the store where the researcher is employed. With the uneven division of 64%, 26% and 10% between the stores it was not possible to use this variable for statistical comparison. The division betwen men and women is also uneven but is more in line with other surveys that find a preponderance of women in the underpaid world of books, whether it is bookstores, libraries or publishing; specifically, this sample was 62% female and 38% male.

The age range of those surveyed is in line with what was expected of these particular stores, as compared to the smaller 'mall' bookstores. This sample of service oriented superstores has no teenagers at all; a full 72% of the staff are in their twenties and thirties, with the rest over forty. The division of full-time versus part-time workers is two-thirds and one-third respectively.

Looking at educational training, 76% of the sample have an undergraduate degree and 26% have graduate degrees. While this is certainly not typical of retail in general, it is in line with the literature that described bookstore manager's preference for an educated staff, regardless of the low compensation and benefits. The types of college degrees earned is also in keeping with the literature, with 80% having a liberal arts background that would include courses in literature. Three respondents actually have library science degrees, and two more have taken courses in library science.

The experience of the sample adds to the profile described in the literature of employees who have chosen books as their career but may switch among settings for variety or to advance. Almost half of those surveyed (43%) had worked in a library, usually during their undergraduate training and a full 53% have had previous bookstore experience, ranging from one month to nine years. One variable that could be easily misinterpreted is that of current bookstore employment

tenure. A figure of 78% having less than one year's experience could reflect a high turnover rate, but, in this case it reflects that 74% of the sample are working at stores that have only been open less than a year.

The topic of training is where the subjective responses begin. Asking someone to remember how many hours they spent learning the business can't help but reflect personal perceptions; some may put down only the hours a supervisor was lecturing or demonstrating a technique, but others may include all the hours spent shelving and alphabetizing the books because that time helped to acquaint them with the inventory. To ask whether this training could be called 'reference' is to allow each participant to define the word; those with library training think of reference in very specific parameters, while many others may assign a meaning that dates back to their primary school experience, making it difficult to draw parallels with their current situation.

As expected, the actual responses reflect this wide variety. Even co-workers who were hired and trained at the exact same time at the very same store gave a range of answers from **zero** hours of training to **forty.** There were five participants that reported over forty hours of training but it was determined that they were all part of management who were sent away to receive intensive off-site training. It was most interesting for the researcher to read the descriptive responses of what the training included; across the board these answers only mentioned the use of electronic searching devises, either Books in Print on compact disc (BIP-CDROM), or each store's own computerized inventory system. No one ever made mention of practicing customer service techniques, such as reference interviews to determine customers needs based on such things as reading level, price, time limit or amount of material. No mention was made of time spent learning how to gleen information over the phone, making use of other reference tools sold in the store, or how to make a customer feel welcome, build rapport or arrange for follow-up of special requests. Further research would need to be conducted among the managers to determine if any of the skills mentioned above were taught, and if not, why not.

It is impossible to use these qualitative figures to prove the original hypothesis that training correlates with correct use of reference materials and successful transactions. The more qualitative

measures of library work experience and total bookstore experience are substituted during discussion later in this chapter of–'success' and 'correct' usage of reference tools and skills.

The question of attendance at workshops or conferences may be another one where the low positive response of 39% reflects the newness of the stores, not any lack of committment from management. Table 1 shows the list of what kinds of outside training this sample had participated in and the frequency of each response in this sample. Note that this list seems to reflect a willingness for bookstore employers to send staff away for knowledge about new **books** but not for new **skills** or familiarity with new reference **tools**.

TABLE 1

JOB-RELATED CONFERENCES OR WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

Conference/Workshop N=19	f	%
Great Lakes Booksellers Association	9	48%
American Booksellers Association	4	22%
Childrens Literature (Ohio State)	2	10%
Writers Conference	1	5%
Cuyahoga County Public Library New Book Talks	1	5%
Beatrix Potter Conference	1	5%
Company run Childrens Book Conference	1	5%
TOTAL	1	100%

Whether or not those in this sample claim to pursue continuing education related to their job on their own time should not be considered a reflection of the newness of the stores. In fact, one might assume just the opposite; that is, new employees who are more likely to feel overwhelmed might be **more** likely to spend outside time trying to becoming more comfortable with their new job duties. With this in mind, the researcher wonderes why only 37% of this sample report doing any kind of self-study, especially when so many made mention in an earlier question of inadequate training. For example, many expressed frustration with the alleged shortcomings of the computer's ability to assist them in searches but only one respondent said he had spent time

practising on a computer. Table 2 shows the kinds of self study that were mentioned and the number of persons giving that response.

TABLE 2

JOB RELATED SELF-STUDY PURSUED BY PARTICIPANTS

Types of Self Study	N=23	f	%
On-going reading of books		9	39%
On-going reading of reviews		7	30.4%
Writing Courses		2	8.7%
Publishing Courses		1	4.4%
Browsing		1	4.4%
Visiting other Bookstores		1	4.4%
Talking to other Book People		1	4.4%
Practising on the Computer		1	4.4%
TOTAL		23	100%

These last two questions point to some obvious areas where bookstore employee training is needed; that is, workshops exist and some people seek out information on new titles and authors but knowing **what** exists is just one component of succesful customer service. Training is still needed in **how** to match the customer with the right book.

The last five survey questions are ones where the answer of 'yes' or 'no' is less important than the reason given. To get at the personality traits, searching skills and accuracy of employees, one must examine the content of their responses for hints of their attitude both towards customers and towards their understanding of the limits of their job.

When asked if they have used a computer to help a customer beyond a simple title or author search, 80% said yes. But when asked if they had ever used a reference book that they sell in the store to indirectly guide them to the book the customer actually wanted, only 59% said yes. There seems to be a perception that searching the computer is the normal expected course of events in a customer transaction but a two-or three-step process is too time-consuming and is better done by the customer at a library. Many participants were not even aware that they sold tools that could be so helpful and some of the respondents who checked tools such as almanacs or books of

quotations were surprised and delighted to find just the answer they needed. Table 3 shows the list of such tools that were used to successfully make a sale, and the number of persons giving that response. If this list of titles, created by just fifty bookstore employees, were actually put together, it would form a very respectable reference/information area. The problem is that these stores don't put any of these books near the special area for customer assistance; these titles are only to be found in the area of the store where they are sold.

TABLE 3
REFERENCE TOOLS FOR SALE IN THE SAMPLE BOOKSTORES THAT HAVE BEEN USED BY PARTICIPANTS TO MAKE A SALE

Reference Tool N=30	f	%
New York Times Guide to Best Books for Children	4	13.4%
New York Public Library Reference Book	2	6.7%
Bartlett's Book of Quotations	2	6.7%
World Almanac	2	6.7%
General Dictionaries	2	6.7%
Biographical Tools	2	6.7%
Encyclopedia of Catalog	1	3.3%
Book of Etiquette	1	3.3%
Readers Advisory Catalog	1	3.3%
A to Zoo	1	3.3%
Literary Marketplace	1	3.3%
Livable Cities Guide	1	3.3%
Poetry Anthologies	1	3.3%
Area maps	1	3.3%
General College Guide	1	3.3%
Foreign Dictionaries	1	3.3%
Zip Code Finder	1	3.3%
Horn Book	1	3.3%
Read Aloud Handbook	1	3.3%
MacIntosh 'Read Me First'	1	3.3%
Dictionary of Etymology	1	3.3%
Wall Street Dictionary	1	3.3%
TOTAL	30	100%

Of course one cannot expect to answer **every** customer question with a tool available in the bookstore, but those customers who have come into a bookstore with a specific question (as opposed to just browsing) probably also have money they are willing to spend that day. If time permits, a two-step search process doesn't seem to be out of line.

The numbers are similar when it comes to working in conjunction with the local library. A full 90% have, and would, refer a customer to their local library to find the answer to a question, but only 60% would actually volunteer to call the library while the customer waited. That patient customer may be rewarded with an answer and the persevering bookstore clerk might be rewarded with a sale, yet there is a long list of reasons the survey takers gave for why calling a library would not be appropriate. Because this question seems to provide a key to the research hypothesis, a full list of the types of responses given are provided in Table 4.

TABLE 4
REASONS GIVEN BY SURVEY PARTICIPANTS FOR AND AGAINST CALLING A LIBRARY FOR CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE

DEFINITE YES:
"The more ingratiating we are, the more books we're likely to sell"
"Its good customer service"
"I wouldn't hesitate"
"Make the customer believe we will do anything to help them"
"It's my job to be as helpful as I can"
"Try to go that extra mile in trying to solve a problem"
Because libraries "have access to more"
Because libraries "know what they are doing"
Because libraries are"reliable" and "can be helpful"
Yes, but "I never thought of it" until you asked (4 participants)

MAYBE:
"If the customer asked"
"If the situation warranted"
"If I thought it would lead to an immediate sale"
"If it was simple, not research related"
"If I was asked to, I feel people should do their own reserach on their own time"
"Not sure its appropriate or what store policy is"
"Perhaps for a regualr well-known customer, but on the whole, no"
"I might look up the number for an elderly customer"
"Time permitted"
"I probably would not volunteer to call"

DEFINITE NO:
"I think customer would gain more from calling in person on their own time"
"It is best if the customer themselves see a book before purchasing"
"Time and workload restrictions"
"Our purpose is to promote what we have available"
"I usually reccomend that they go and see the book and decide"
"Best if a person who wants the book describe it directly to the library"
"Never had the need" (8 months employment)
"Customer can call when no sale will result"
"Don't think of it"
"Lack of time"

The researcher believes there are several factors to be examined here that relate to the purpose of the study; it does seem that a clerk's idea of how far customer service should extend is connected to their training and management's attitude. The literature presents the premise that, first and foremost, good customer service is about pleasing the customer. The clerk that would only call if a customer asked is missing the point. If a customer is offered something they didn't expect, that customer is more likely to come back to that particular store, perhaps even asking for that particular staff person. The clerk that only offers this service to "regular" customers will find that the list of regular customers never grows. The clerks who believe that store's should only promote what is in stock or assist in questions that lead to an "immediate sale" will miss all the sales to be made from special orders and future visits.

Second, this simple extension of sevice must be explained, encouraged and modeled by management for it to work. Respondents who fell in all three categories of yes, no and maybe, demonstrated in words that calling a library is not a technique that was ever mentioned in their orientation or ongoing supervision. Four subjects who answered with a firm 'yes' made a point of saying it had never occured to them until they saw the question. One 'maybe' worried that such service was not allowed by store policy and several of the 'nos' implied that the need had never arisen even though these same subjects saw flaws in their own inventory look-up system and had ample cause to refer a customer to a library.

The last question asked respondents to design a fantasy information desk in a bookstore. Here the researcher was looking for quantity as well as quality responses. It was assumed that length of bookstore experience and exposure to library principles would result in a longer "wish list" of tools and a more insightful approach to re-designing the capabilities of the computer systems they were currently using.

Looking at quantity alone, six people didn't answer this question at all or could not think of one way to improve on the system in use at their store. This statistic alone is disturbing to the researcher, knowing just how many helpful tools are out there if bookstores could only afford them. Of those who did put down ideas, twenty (45%) thought of less than five ideas, seventeen

more (39%) thought of less than ten, and seven clerks (16%) listed ten or more ideas of fantasy reference tools.

Total length of bookstore experience does appear to be related to the total number of ideas for an information workstation in that **all** six of the employees who didn't give any response to this question had less than one year of experience. But, otherwise, experience does not have a strong influence on this sample's ideas because all three levels of experience compared earlier (less than one year, up to two years, more than two years) are almost equally likely to fall in each of the three idea categories (less than five, less than ten, ten or more). Work experience in a library also appears to be unrelated to reference area design ideas - if a scattergram of number of ideas for those with experience was compared to one for those without experience, they would be virtually identical.

Switching now to quality of ideas for a reference area (versus quantity), Table 5 shows the range of responses given organized into types and showing how many people gave each response if it was more than one. It is interesting to note that some of the answers given as fantasies describe both tools and computer search options that are in each of the stores; that is, staff are wishing for things they all ready have, if only someone had trained them more thoroughly to know it.

A few more interesting points will be made regarding Table 5 before moving on in the analysis of all the questions regarding various demographic features. As in the earlier question on reference tools that are both sold and used in the store, the overall list in Table 5 is an impressive one. Participants have included all the major sources of reviews, all the major databases and many of the most current CD-ROM products. As for the area of electronic improvements, this list would probably be welcome at the research and development department of any computerized inventory control company. But, it also seems apparent that at least half of the sample could use some exposure and practice with the wide range of tools available today.

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TABLE 5
IDEAS FOR A FANTASY INFORMATION/REFERENCE DESK
IN A BOOKSTORE, LISTED BY TYPE AND FREQUENCY

Electronic Tools	
Books in Print on CD-ROM	22
Modems from Store to Wholesalers	11
Microfiche Reader for Wholesalers Inventory	10
Foreign Language Books in Print on CD-ROM	6
Cleveland Public Library Online Catalog	5
Audio and Video Books in Print on CD-ROM	4
Modems from Store Inventory to all CD-ROMs	4
Fortthcoming Books in Print on CD-ROM	3
Telephone	3
Fax	3
Printer Connected to all Terminals	3
Ulrich's Guide to Periodicals on CD-ROM	2
Small Press Books in Print on CD-ROM	1
Photocopier	1
More computer terminals, some for customers	1
Library of Congress Catalog	1
Publishers Trade List Annual on CD-ROM	1
Photocopier	1
More Computer terminals, some for customers	1
Databases	
Infotrac	1
Wilsonline	1
Dialog	1
ARTFL	1
Compuserve	1
OCLC	1
Lexus/Nexus	1
Humanities Index	1
Improvements to Existing Electronic Tools	
"Non-abbreviated titles"	5
"Faster Keyword searching"	4
Books in Print that gives annotated reviews and excerpts from text	4
Books in inventory classified by department head assigned to that section	3
Books in inventory coded by possible cross-sections	3
Approximate/adjacent search capabilities	2
Sale prices kept current and shown on the screen	2
Be able to order, bill, ship to customer in one step	1
"User friendly"	1
"One that works"	1
"Better Subject access"	1
"Proper spellings"	1
Weekly updates	1

'Windows' program to do more than one search at a time	1
"Full color visuals"	1
"Voice-operated"	1
"Braille output"	1
"Illustrator search"	1
Extra room on title screen for comments	1
A way to note if book is on salesfloor or in overstock	1
"Program that tells you the color and size of a book"	1

Print Volumes

Books in Print	10
Books out of Print	8
Readers Guide to Periodical Literature	4
American Booksellers Manuals	2
Benets's Readers Encyclopedia	2
Bartlett's Book of Familiar Quotations	1
Dictionary	1
Thesaurus	1
Standard and Poores	1
New York Times Best Books for Children	1
Zipcode Directory	1
Publisher's Catalogs	1
Bowkers	1
Whitakers	1
High School Reading lists	1
Specialized bibliographies for:	
Children	1
Gay/Lesbian	1
Black	1
Jewish	1
Local Interest	1
Award Winners Lists	1
Schedule of authors advertising on TV/radio shows	1

Periodicals

New York Times Book Reviews	3
Horn Book	1
Lambda	1
Bloomsbury	1

Decorating Ideas

"Fresh cut flowers"	1
"Good lighting"	1
"Study carrols"	1
"Bulletin board"	1
"Comfortable chairs"	1
"Audio/video preview area"	1
Information workstation away from cash registers	1

Humorous Ideas

"Deli food and cappachino"	1
"Storytelling, jazz and poetry"	1
"Virtual reality to search store and warehouse shelves"	1
"Computer to vaccum store, drive me home and do my homework"	1
"Psychic on duty for customers who say 'there's a book I'm thinking of..."	1
"Helipad"	1

As mentioned in the methodology section, Katz and Fraley (1984) found several correlations between what librarians bring to a position and how they perform. While it is not possible to translate their findings directly to a bookstore setting, similar trends and concepts can be compared. They found that education correlated with efficiency in searching style. Questions eight and nine in this survey attempted to show this same relationship in asking about more complex computer searches and use of print reference tools to answer customer requests.

In this sample, 84% of those without a college degree, 80% of those with a college degree and 93% of those with a graduate degree could provide an example in question eight of an incident where they used a computer beyond a simple author or title search. Of those that couldn't, all expressed frustration with their store's inventory computer system that "didn't work" or was "inaccurate"; since every store has similar computers, this would imply that the employee lacked an understanding of computer syntax and abbreviations, but this lack of understanding cannot be attributed to the level of their formal education.

Question nine's outcome showed a stronger trend towards the value of education but it also had a surprising twist. In asking about the use of a reference tool to help a customer, 50% of those without a college degree, 62% of those with a college degree, and 69% of those with a graduate degree could provide a specific example. This does seem to support Katz and Fraley, but not overwhelmingly, and the whole premise is put in doubt when it is pointed out that two of the four employees with graduate degrees who could **not** think of an example are the ones with an M.L.S. The next correlation of Katz and Fraley was that experience is related to accuracy of reference help. True accuracy can only be measured by asking the customers themselves for their assesment of

their interaction with a clerk, or by conducting unobtrusive testing of the staff with trained observers. The researcher attempted to get at accuracy by asking for the "outcome," "follow-up" or "resolution" in all the questions about actual incidents. In most cases, staff did not answer the question with that kind of terminology. Those that did, only looked at "outcome" in terms of actual sales.

This brings up the point raised earlier that good customer service is not just around the exchange of money. The researcher had hoped to see evidence of staff offering to take a customer's name and number to call them back when a difficult question could not be answered immediately. That is, 'accuracy' in a bookstore cannot always be providing the answer but it could mean providing the key, or a partial answer that puts them on the right track. A phone number of a publisher, an out-of-print book dealer's business card, or a printout of an extensive bibliography can all be viewed as legitimate attempts at accuracy.

Just as librarians come to know the specific interests of their regular customers, bookstore clerks can pursue hard to asnwer questions long after the customer has left, so that the next time they come in the clerk can say 'Mrs. Smith, I thought about what you were asking last week and I've set aside a title I think you'll find helpful." Given that the concept of 'accuracy' could not actually be measured with this type of instrument, it is still enlightening to look at 'experience' as compared to whether or not subjects described appropriate incidents in the three open-ended questions. 'Experience' will be examined in both library and bookstore settings.

Looking first at subjects with experience in a library setting, they are **less** likely to have given an adequate response to the computer search question (43% versus 56%), they are **less** likely to have given an adequate response to the reference tool question (41% versus 59%), and they were **less** likely to have referred a customer to a library (40% versus 60%). This is all **quite** contrary to the premise that library training makes a better bookstore clerk. Several speculations will be made here for the sake of discussion, but it will remain for future researchers to draw conclusions. Perhaps people with library experience see the bookstore setting as being so different from a library that it doesn't occur to them to transfer much of their skills. Perhaps their training in

this current position and the example set by the store management discourage them from transferring library skills because of time and staff constraints. Or perhaps the open-ended questions asking for actual incidents were not worded adequately enough for bookstore clerks with library experience to recall what skills they used, that is, some techniques learned in libraries can become second-nature and therefore harder to recall as individual actions

For experience as it was measured as previous bookstore experience, a new variable was created that combined the months at their present job with any other bookstore jobs to make a total number of months. Three arbitrary divisions were then made for respondents who had worked up to one year, up to two years, and greater than two years. In each of the same three open-ended questions used above to judge accuracy, there is a very **slight** tendency for the number of positive answers to increase with experience, but the number of cases in each category are so small that percentages can be misleading. For example, in regards to more elaborate computer searches, first year workers gave an acceptable resonse 79% of the time, second year was up to 80%, and more than two years was 82%. For use of a store's reference tools, the increase creeps up from 88% to 90% to 94% with experience. These numbers agree with Katz and Fraley and with this researchers premise but not to the degree expected.

The final formula in Katz and Fraley's paper is the elusive measure of overall performance. They looked at a combination of personality traits that went beyond customer service and use of reference materials. They factored in a librarian's willingness to seek out more professional knowledge and his or her ability to teach this new information to others. This survey asked respondents to describe their pursuit of bookstore-related skills outside the work setting, either in organized workshops or on their own. The percentages for these questions were discussed earlier in this chapter, but it is brought up again here to lead into the final discussion of what research is still needed. Due to the space constraint of wanting to keep the survey within a manageable two pages, the researcher dropped a sub-category of the questions on continuing education. It would have been helpful to ask if management had ever asked the subjects to present their newly acquired knowledge and skills to their co-workers. Speaking from experience working at two of the three

stores surveyed, this researcher has attended several job-related, company paid classes, workshops and conferences, but never once was asked to summarize, justify or pass on what was learned. When this service was voluntarily offered, management never expressed an interest. As many managers in the literature review stated, funds are limited and time is already tight, so they hope to hire staff with bookselling skills already in place. But, if staff are pursuing book-related education on their own time and with their own money, why wouldn't managers take advantage of that opportunity? If managers knew how often this small sample of booksellers lamented their meager on-the-job training, would they be able to understand the link that ties reference knowledge to sales, and would they do something about it?

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Looking back at the goals originally set for this research, most of the objectives were met and most of the result were in line with those found in the literature. Although the sample size was small, it was a fair representation of bookstore clerks in one major metropolitan area. The researcher was able to confirm that, for most bookstore employees, the training period is brief and lacking in the area of reference skills. This fact alone would be enough to confirm that these store's cannot be offering the best customer service available because their staffs' are aware that they have been inadequately prepared.

A closer look at what reference tools and skills were being used showed that Fakih (1989), quoted earlier as calling a computer "just a tool," was right. Everyone in this sample has the luxury of using an online inventory system with author, title and keyword search capabilities, as well as the highly sophisticated Book in Print on CD-ROM: and, yet, many complained that these tools were badly designed and inadequate. Their answers confirmed that they had not been properly trained on these products. This is a problem for management to resolve, but it is also falls back on the clerks, who, perhaps too easily, give up on figuring these tools out and are slow to find alternative methods of helping a customer.

As hoped, there was evidence that participation alone did serve as a motivation for some of the sample to ask for help and try new sources. While it was not possible to assign performance levels, there was informal data that helped to identify what factors may contribute to successful and efficient searching. Education and experience were both linked to 'correct' answers, but, ironically, a library science education or work background were **not** the deciding factors. More research is needed to understand why library science knowledge may not translate directly to a bookstore setting, but enough information was collected here to move forward in designing a bookstore training program that would make use of available tools to increase sales.

REFERENCE TOOLS AND SKILLS IN THE BOOKSTORE

Please circle the appropriate answer and fill in any information requested

1. MALE FEMALE
2. PART-TIME FULL-TIME
3. AGE: BELOW 20 21-30 31-40 41-50 OVER 50
4. EDUCATION: UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE NO YES
   MAJOR:
   GRADUATE DEGREE NO YES
   MAJOR:
5. BOOKSTORE EXPERIENCE:
   CURRENT EMPLOYMENT ____YEARS ____MONTHS
   PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT ____YEARS ____MONTH
   SECTION USUALLY WORK IN ___ADULTS _____JUVENILE
6. LIBRARY EXPERIENCE:
   HAVE YOU EVER TAKEN LIBRARY COURSEWORK? YES NO
   DESCRIBE:

   HAVE YOU EVER WORKED OR VOLUNTEERED IN A LIBRARY? YES NO
   DESCRIBE:

7. FORMAL BOOKSELLING TRAINING:
   A. PLEASE ESTIMATE THE NUMBER OF HOURS OF FORMAL TRAINING YOU RECEIVED AT YOUR PRESENT JOB ___
   B. PLEASE DESCRIBE THE PARTS OF THAT TRAINING THAT YOU WOULD CONSIDER " REFERENCE," OR SEARCHING SKILLS:

   C. PLEASE LIST AND DESCRIBE ANY LOCAL, REGIONAL OR NATIONAL CONFERENCES OR WORKSHOPS YOU HAVE ATTENDED THAT RELATE TO YOUR JOB, (INCLUDE WHETHER IT WAS REQUIRED OR PAID FOR BY YOUR EMPLOYER).

8. PLEASE DESCRIBE A RECENT INCIDENT WHEN YOU USED A COMPUTER TO HELP A CUSTOMER THAT WENT BEYOND A SIMPLE TITLE OR AUTHOR SEARCH. INCLUDE WHETHER THE OUTCOME WAS SUCCESSFUL, HOW THE TECHNOLOGY HELPED YOU

9. PLEASE DESCRIBE A RECENT INCIDENT WHERE YOU USED A REFERENCE GUIDE THAT YOUR STORE SELLS TO HELP A CUSTOMER ANSWER A QUESTION. INCLUDE THE TITLE, HOW YOU USED THE TOOL AND THE OUTCOME.

10. PLEASE DESCRIBE A RECENT INCIDENT WHERE YOU REFERRED A CUSTOMER TO THEIR LOCAL LIBRARY FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE. INCLUDE THE CIRCUMSTANCES, AND WHAT KIND OF RESOLUTION OR FOLLOW-UP WAS REACHED.

11. HAVE YOU EVER OR WOULD YOU EVER CALL A LIBRARY YOURSELF TO HELP A CUSTOMER? WHY/WHY NOT?

12. IF YOU WERE DESIGNING AN INFORMATION DESK FOR A BOOKSTORE WITH AN UNLIMITED BUDGET, PLEASE LIST THE REFERENCE TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY YOU WOULD PURCHASE AND WHY. (THIS COULD INCLUDE FANTASY AS WELL AS ACTUAL REFERENCE TOOLS!) USE BACK OF SHEET.

Appendix B

School of Library and Information Science
(216) 672-2782
Fax 216-672-7965

Kent STATE UNIVERSITY
P O Box 5190 Kent, Ohio 44242-0001

Re: Reference Tools and Skills in the Bookstore

Dear Bookstore Employee:

I am a full-time bookseller and a part-time graduate student in Library and Information Science at Kent State University. As part of my required research paper, I am doing a survey about the use of reference tools and skills in bookstores. I am asking the staff at three area bookstores to answer questions about their education and on-the-job experience with customer service.

Please be assured that your participation is voluntary; confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed as you will not be signing your name. Only the investigator has access to the survey data. There is no penalty of any kind should you choose not to participate or if you withdraw at any time. This survey is in no way connected to your employment - please respect your manager's generosity in distributing the survey by completing the survey on your own time. I estimate it will take you twenty minutes to complete; the risks involved are no greater than those encountered in everyday life. Feel free to use the back of the pages to expand on your answers or to add any suggestions or comments. A copy of the results of the study will be available upon request. Please don't discuss your answers with co-workers.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call me at (216) 991-4699 or Dr. Lois Buttlar, my research advisor at (216) 672-2782. If you have any questions regarding research at Kent State University you may contact Dr. Eugene Wenninger, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, at (216) 672-2070. Completed surveys should be returned in the attached stamped envelope no later than November 15th. Thank you for your time and cooperation, it is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Eileen Coan
Graduate Student
3305 Kenmore Rd.
Shaker Hts., OH 44122

APPENDIX C

Field Names and Coding Descriptions

Field Name	Type	Length	Coding
IDNUMBER	N	2	
STORE	N	1	1=Barnes & Noble
			2=Borders
			3=Booksellers
SEX	A	1	M=Male
			F=Female
WORKHOURS	A	1	P=Part-time
			F=Full-time
AGE	N	1	1=Below 20
			2=21-30
			3=31-40
			4=41-50
			5=over 50
EDUCUNDER	A	1	N=No, no degree
			Y=Yes, a B.A. degree
EDUCGRAD	A	1	N=No, no graduate degree
			Y=Yes, a graduate degree
MAJOR	N	1	1=Library Science
			2=Liberal Arts
			3=Technical/Business
BOOKCURR	N	3	Number of Months at Current Job
BOOKPREV	N	3	Number of Months at Other Bookstores
TOTAL	N	3	Total Number of Months at Bookstores
SECTION	A	1	A=Usually work in Adults

			J=Usually work in Juvenile
LIBCOURSE	A	1	Y=Yes, Some library course work
			N=No, No library course work
LIBWORK	A	1	Y=Yes, paid or volunteer library work
			N=No, no library work experience
CURRTRNG	N	2	Number of hours formal training at Present Position
REFERENCE	A	1	Y=Yes, some training was reference
			N=No, no training in reference
REFHOURS	N	2	Number of hours reference training
CONFERENCE	A	1	Y=Yes, attended book related conferences
			N=No, never attended book conferences
CONTED	A	1	Y=Yes, have done book study on their own
			N=No, Don't do any study on their own
COMPUTER	A	1	Y=Yes, have successfully used a computer to help a customer in advanced search
			N=No, haven't used a computer this way
REFGUIDE	A	1	Y=Yes, have used a reference tool in store to help a customer search
			N=No, haven't used a reference tool
REFERLIB	A	1	Y=Yes, have referred customer to library
			N=No, haven't referred customer
CALLLIB	A	1	Y=Yes, would call a library for help
			N=No, would not call a library
INFOFANT	N	2	Number of reference tools would put at a fantasy bookstore help desk

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